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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /072 W
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R 171355Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 259
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 0409

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, TU, BU
SUBJECT: TURKISH ATTITUDE TOWARD BALKAN COOPERATION

REF: (A) SOFIA 2553, (B) SOFIA 2554 (NOTAL), (C) ANKARA 0143 (NOTAL

1. FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS THE TURKISH POSITION WITH RESPECT TO BALKAN COOPERATION HAS BEEN RELATIVELY CONSTANT. THE ESSENCE OF THAT POSITION IS THAT TURKEY SUPPORTS MULTILATERAL BALKAN COOPERATION IN ALL AREAS EXCEPT POLITICS. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENTS THAT HAVE RULED TURKEY DURING THAT PERIOD HAVE NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY, PREFERRING TO FOCUS THEIR EFFORTS ON BILATERAL DEVELOPMENTS. (THE SINGLE MAJOR EXCEPTION TO THIS HAS BEEN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ISLAMIC WORLD AS A WHOLE.) ADDITIONALLY, THERE WAS SOME TURKISH RELUCTANCE TO COOPERATE TOTALLY WITH GREEK
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PRIMIN CARAMANLIS' BALKAN INITIATIVE IN 1975 SIMPLY BECAUSE OF TURKISH-GREEK RIVALRY. NEVERTHELESS, AS WE REPORTED AS THAT TIME, ALTHOUGH TURKEY MIGHT NOT BE AT THE VANGUARD OF EFFORTS FOR BALKAN COOPERATION, IT DOES NOT WISH TO BE BLAMED FOR BLOCKING PROGRESS IN THAT FIELD.

2. IN THE COURSE OF A CONVERSATION COVERING SEVERAL TOPICS

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JANUARY 17, MFA EASTERN DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR SELCUK TARLAN REITERATED TO EMBOFF THAT GOT POLICY ON BALKAN COOPERATION--AT LEAST AS FAR AS THE MFA WAS AWARE--WAS AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SATATED IT; THAT IS, TO ENCOURAGE MULTILATERAL COOPERATION ON ALL SUBJECTS EXCEPT POLITICAL SUBJECTS. HE SPECULATED THAT WITH THE FORMATION OF THE NEW ECEVIT GOVERNMENT TURKEY MAY OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN BALKAN COOPERATION. HE NOTED THAT THE PROGRAM OF THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH VAGUE, SPOKE ABOUT TURKEY'S ROLE AS A BALKAN STATE.

3. WE ARE AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN THE APPARENT RETICENCE OF TURKISH DIPLOMATS TO DISCUSS BALKAN COOPERATION AS INDICATED IN REF B. BULGARIA'S ABILITY TO RESTRICT THE AMOUNT OF ELECTRICITY IT SUPPLIES TURKEY OR TO LIMIT TURKISH AIR AND SURFACE TRANSPORT-ATION TO EUROPE GIVES IT POTENTIAL LEVERAGE OVER TURKISH POLICIES. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT THE GOB HAS TRIED TO APPLY THAT LEVERAGE TO INFLUENCE TURKEY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD BALKAN COOPERATION. (MOREOVER, SINCE BULGARIANS CAN STALL BALKAN COOPERATION WITHOUT TURKISH HELP WE WONDER IF GOB WOULD WASTE ITS LEVARAGE ON THIS ISSUE.) WE SUSPECT REAL REASON FOR TURKISH EMBASSY'S APPARENT DISINTEREST IN BALKAN COOPERATION IS THAT DEALING WITH THE BILATERAL PROBLEMS BETWEEN TURKEY AND BULGARIA LEAVES IT LITTLE TIME TO CONCERN ITSELF WITH OTHER MATTERS.
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